

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 01368 151950Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSC-01 /028 W  
-----060701 151953Z /72

P R 151401Z DEC 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3922  
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 1368

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV NS  
SUBJ: CABINET FORMATION DRAGS ON

1. ALTHOUGH NEW PARLIAMENT ELECTED OCTOBER 31 IS BEING SEATED TODAY (DECEMBER 15), FORMATEUR ARRON ENCOUNTERED A FEW SNAGS IN HIS EFFORT TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT BEFORE PARLIAMENT WAS INSTALLED. AS A RESULT FORMER CABINET REMAINS IN OFFICE AS CARETAKER GOVERNMENT PENDING FINAL AGREEMENT AMONG ALL THE PARTIES IN THE NPK GOVERNMENT COMBINATION ON WHICH INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BE GIVEN CABINET PORTFOLIOS.

2. GOVERNMENT PARTIES AGREED OVER TWO WEEKS AGO ON PARTY DIVISION OF SEATS WITH SIX POSTS GOING TO ARRON'S NPS AND TWO GOING TO EACH OF THE THREE SMALLER PARTIES IN THE COMBINATION (THE NPS AND THE KTPI ALSO WERE ALLOTTED ONE UNDER MINISTER EACH). TWO OF THOSE PARTIES, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PSV AND THE JAVANESE-BASED KTPI, WERE FACED WITH INTERNAL SPLITS OVER WHO SHOULD BE PROPOSED AS MINISTERS FOR THE DEPARTMENTS ASSIGNED TO THEM. THESE SCHISMS WERE LARGELY QUESTIONS OF PERSONALITY AND POWER RATHER THAN ANY BASIC DIFFERENCES ON POLICY. ALTHOUGH PSV HAS REPORTEDLY NOW REACHED AGREEMENT, THE KTPI, WHICH  
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IS HEADED BY JAILED FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER SOEMITA, HAS STILL NOT RESOLVED ITS DISPUTE WITH SOEMITA'S FACTION ON ONE SIDE AND ANOTHER HEADED BY KTPI MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AMAT IN OPPOSITION. ARRON HIMSELF IS PREPARED TO PROCEED WITH FORMATION OF THE CABINET, BUT CONTINUING KTPI INDECISION MEANS A POSTPONEMENT OF UNDERTAIN DURATION.

3. COMMENT: SURINAM IS NOW CONFRONTED WITH THE ANOMALY OF A NEWLY-ELECTED PARLIAMENT AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT CONTINUING IN OFFICE FOR AN UNKNWON LENGTH OF TIME. ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION, MINISTERS CAN REMAIN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FOR UP TO THREE MONTHS, SO PRESENT MINISTERS CAN CONTINUE TO HOLD BOTH POSTS AND PNR MINISTERS INCLUDING MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS BRUMA ALSO REMAIN IN OFFICE. OF GREATER CONCERN TO ARRON WILL BE THE THINNESS OF HIS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY DURING THIS PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY. TWO NPK MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE PRESENTLY HOSPITALIZED AND THE ABSENCE OR DEFECTION OF ONE OTHER NPK PARLIAMENTARIAN WOULD ERASE ARRON'S CONTROL IN THE LEGISLATURE. ALTHOUGH PARLIAMENT INTENDS TO PROCEED WITH HANDLING OF PROPOSED 200-MILE ZONE LEGISLATION AND QUESTION OF SURINAM'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE IMF, IBRD AND IDA, WHAT THIS MEANS IS AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF GOVERNMENT IMMOBILITY WHICH COULD DRAG ON FOR YET SOME TIME. ZURHELLEN

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## Message Attributes

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